

VZCZCXRO8308
OO RUEHDT RUEHPB
DE RUEHJA #0666/01 1031032
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O 131032Z APR 09
FM AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2105
INFO RUCNARF/ASEAN REGIONAL FORUM COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 JAKARTA 000666

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR EAP, EAP/MTS, EAP/MLS, EAP/ANP, EAP/RSP
NSC FOR E.PHU

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/13/2019

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PINS](#) [KDEM](#) [ID](#)

SUBJECT: PAPUA -- INCIDENTS FUEL POST-ELECTION TENSION

REF: A. JAKARTA 653 AND PREVIOUS

[1](#)B. JAKARTA 396

Classified By: Ambassador Cameron R. Hume, reasons 1.4 (b+d).

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: Two additional incidents, including one fatality, have added to post-election tensions in Papua. Although five people are now confirmed dead in the series of incidents, the security forces have pledged a tough but measured response. Papuans are increasingly calling for a dialogue with Jakarta to address the issues that are fueling Papuan resentment, particularly the slow implementation of the province's Special Autonomy Law and chronic underdevelopment. Some senior Indonesian officials support such a dialogue, but it is unlikely to materialize before the conclusion of presidential elections in July (or September, if a runoff is required). END SUMMARY.

INCIDENTS CONTINUE

[1](#)2. (C) Two incidents since the elections have further stoked tensions in restive Papua province. In the early morning hours of April 13, unknown assailants stabbed and killed a non-indigenous resident of Wamena in Papua's central highlands. Later that same day, police found several small improvised bombs in trash dump in Abepura, a suburb of provincial capital Jayapura. One of the bombs exploded but caused no injuries or damage. These latest events occurred at the same locations as other incidents in the days before Indonesia's April 9 legislative elections.

[1](#)3. (C) New details have emerged about other pre-election incidents:

--April 6: Several thousand pro-independence supporters clashed with police in Nabire, in central Papua. Police shot nine people, including a 10-year old boy; one person remains in a coma. One police officer was seriously wounded by an arrow. Numerous protesters and police received other minor injuries.

--April 8: A small improvised bomb exploded on the road between Jayapura and the Papua ew Guinea border but caused no damage. A second bomb failed to explode.

--April 8: Unknown assailants killed three and injured two non-indigenous residents of Wamena.

--April 9: Arson at a fuel depot in Biak, an island of the northern coast of Papua, left one person dead.

--April 9: A pro-separatist group attacked a police station in Abepura with spears, arrows, and other traditional weapons. Police killed one of the attackers and detained six others.

--April 9: Arsonists burned an administration building at Cendrawasih University and several vehicles in Abepura. (Given the close proximity in locations, police have speculated that some of the same individuals involved in the Abepura police station attack were also involved in this incident.)

Despite incidents in the hours before the polls opened, voting proceeded across Papua largely without incident (Ref A).

¶4. (C) These incidents come during a period of already heightened tensions in Papua. Several activists remain on trial for organizing protests involving the Morning Star flag, which the Indonesian government has outlawed as a separatist symbol. (Note: So far twelve activists have been convicted in these cases although the three-year sentences meted out fall far short of the 20-25 years that prosecutors had pressed for.) Relations are also strained between the police and the Papuan Customary Council (DAP), a group of traditional and tribal leaders. Police suspect the DAP of involvement in the flag-raising protests and recently searched their Jayapura offices in connection with alleged plans to disrupt the elections.

MEASURED RESPONSE SO FRR

¶5. (C) After some initial confusion, security officials promised a tough but measured response. National police Chief Bambang Hendarto Danurid denied the incidents were related to the elections. However, Coordinating Minister for Political, Legal and Security Affairs Widodo contradicted him

JAKARTA 00000666 002 OF 002

and said that independence supporters sought to disrupt the vote. Senior security officials, including Danuri and military chief General Djoko Santoso, plan to travel to Jayapura to review the situation. The police are taking the lead in investigating the incidents. No additional police or military personnel have entered the province. Our contacts report that the situation in Jayapura and other cities is calm but tense.

¶6. (C) Security officials have pledged to work with Papuan leaders to defuse tensions. Papua Governor Barnabas Suebu is coordinating closely with security officials and told them he wanted a "firm but peaceful approach," according to a key advisor. Suebu is also consulting with traditional and religious leaders in an effort to defuse tensions.

¶7. (C) Contacts in the provincial government and NGOs are particularly worried about the possibility of further attacks that target non-Papuan migrants to the region, like the incidents in Wamena. This, they fear, will create greater pressure on the police to crack down or may provoke vigilante attacks by migrants claiming to act in self-defense.

POLITICAL SOLUTION NEEDED

¶8. (C) Papuans are increasing their calls for a political dialogue with Jakarta in response to these incidents. They point to the slow implementation of Papua's Special Autonomy Law and the province's chronic underdevelopment as the sources of Papuan discontent. This point is not lost on officials in Jakarta. A leading government thinktank has published plans for such a dialogue (the Papua Roadmap), which has garnered support from VP Kalla, Defense Minister Sudarsono and other senior officials (See Ref B). However, our contacts do not expect any movement on the proposal until after presidential elections conclude in July, (or September, if a runoff is required). Until then, Papua is likely to remain tense.

HUME